

Increasing Engagement with Instructional Choice

WEBINAR | September 2020



Why Choice?

Providing students with ample choices is essential to promote equitable access to content and to enhance engagement. Instructional choice is a strategy where teachers provide students with one or more options from which to choose to complete an assignment or activity (Lane et al., 2018). When used effectively, encouraging students to make choices independently enhances autonomy, motivation, self-determination, and engagement, and can reduce problem behaviors (Kern & Clemons, 2007). Such learner characteristics are essential for student success both in and out of the classroom, and are especially important with the current shift to virtual and hybrid learning models.

Here we present five methods for incorporating instructional choice in virtual learning environments: within task, between task, task order, choices related to external factors, and others. Please note that students should have some prerequisite knowledge of each option, so they can make an informed decision.

Types of Choice

Within Task

Between Task

Task Order

External Factors

Other



Within Task Choice: provide students with two or more options of activities to complete within one assignment. All students have to complete the same assignment, but within the assignment they have options. Choices could relate to format, technology, strategy, and context.

Between Task Choice: provide students with two or more options between assignments, one of which must be completed. Focus on choices with equivalent difficulty and that will all accomplish the learning objective. Consider having students share their finished work with the rest of the class, since not every student will complete the same work.

Choice of Task Order: provide students with a set number of assignments, all of which must be completed, but students choose the order of completion.

Choices Related to External Factors: provide students with two or more options related to factors for completing the assignment, but unrelated to the assignment itself.

Other Options: elicit feedback from students and caregivers, develop a choice board, create a random activity generator.

Implementation

1. Determine a strategy to incorporate
2. Identify a lesson or date to use the strategy
3. Outline steps to incorporate the strategy
4. After implementing, reflect/ seek feedback on engagement impact
5. Share with your staff and/or team



Working with Caregivers

Offer caregivers a variety of options for contact, such as email, phone, and text. Suggest incorporating planned choices in before school, activity, and snack break routines. Always solicit feedback before implementing major changes in scheduling, curriculum, or technology, and when in doubt, offer choices for possible changes.

For more information...

[MO SW-PBS Covid-19 Resources](#)

[National Center for PBIS publications](#)

[Kern, L., & Clemens, N. H. \(2007\). Antecedent strategies to promote appropriate classroom behavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, 44, 65-75. <http://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20206>](#)

[Lane, K. L., Menzies, H. M., Ennis, R. P., Oakes, W. P., Royer, J., & Lane, K. S. \(2018\). Instructional choice: An effective, efficient, low-intensity strategy to support student success. *Beyond Behavior*, 27, 160-167. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1074295618786>](#)